

ZJER

ZIMBABWE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Volume 27 Number 3
November 2015



UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

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School Head Leadership Style and Its Perceived Influence on Teachers' Performance in Bikita District Rural Secondary Schools of Masvingo Province

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Abstract

This study was carried out to establish the perceived influence of school head leadership styles on teachers' performance. In this study the researchers used a mixed method research design that incorporated both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population consisted of ten school heads and sixty teachers, thus a total of seventy respondents. The research instruments were opened and closed ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The major findings revealed that the school heads in Bikita district of Masvingo province were generally perceived to display a high degree of democratic style of leadership based on the frequency of responses. It also emerged that leadership style of school heads influence performance of teachers. Calibre of students, teacher incompetence, lack of professional development and lack of motivation were also some of the factors that affected performance of some teachers.

Introduction

There was great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes (Bush, 2007). According to Mills (2005, p. 11), leadership is 'a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviours of others'. Leadership therefore entails the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not

otherwise do to achieve intended goals. Thus, leadership vitalises the ability to influence followers to comply with orders, develop commitment to organisational goals, and contribute their efforts at more than minimum performance levels (Schroeder & Karddoff, 2002). Maicibi (2012) contends that without a proper leadership style, effective performance cannot be realized in schools. Even if the school has all the required instructional materials and financial resources, it will not be able to use them effectively if students are not directed in their use, or if teachers who guide in their usage are not properly trained to implement them effectively.

Armstrong (2009) defines leadership as influence, power and the legitimate authority acquired by a leader to be able to effectively transform the organization through the direction of the human resources that are the most important organizational asset, leading to the achievement of desired purpose. This can be done through the articulation of the vision and mission of the organization at every moment, and influence the staff to define their power to share this vision. School leadership in particular, has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. Apart from improving the school climate and environment, school leadership play a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivation and capacities of teachers which are the major determinants of teacher performance. Through supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality, school leaders adapt the teaching programmes to local needs, promote teamwork among teachers, and engage in teacher monitoring, evaluation and professional development (Port, Nusche & Hopkins, 2008). Competent school leaderships is therefore crucial in establishing school-level support systems and supervisory practices that can secure professional commitment from teachers, even in difficult and disadvantaged circumstances. Leadership in a school is a linchpin around

which all school activities revolve (Volunteer Services Overseas, 2002), hence the need to explore its influence on teachers' performance in rural secondary schools in Bikita district.

How leaders choose to lead can impact on how content employees are (Sauer, 2011). This is particularly important for school leadership if the school heads are to enhance teacher performance in secondary school. In line with the above views, researchers such as Freyr Halldorsson of the University of Minnesota and Jaana Kuoppala of the America College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine have found out that leadership style is related to job performance (Kuoppala, Lamminpaa, Liira & Vainio, 2008). The results of a research conducted by Kim (1986) in Texas, USA, reveal that teachers were more satisfied where their leaders showed consideration at work stations as this seemed to become more related to their job performance. Different work situations call for different leadership styles for effectiveness (Roberts & Sampson, 2011). This suggests that leaders need to adapt their styles to fit the situation.

The behavioural approach to leadership emphasises what effective leaders do by identifying both behaviour of leaders (leadership style) and the effects that leader behaviour on subordinate work performance and satisfaction (Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristiqueta, 2009). Hartog and Koopman (2011) affirm that in the behavioural approach, leadership effectiveness is a function of leadership styles exerted by the leader. The behavioural approach focuses on leadership as a behaviour pattern which can be taught ((Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristiqueta, 2009). It is the contention of researchers such as Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) that leaders, in a school context can also learn leadership behaviour. This suggestion has relevance to the current study in so

far as the researcher's intention to identify what leadership behaviour school heads display in tandem with the style approach.

Studies that sought to interrogate the behaviour of leaders were first conducted in 1940s by the Bureau of Business Research at Ohio State University (Razik & Swanson, 2001 ; Yukl, 2006). The studies used the leadership behaviour description questionnaire (LBDQ) and the leadership opinion questionnaire (LOQ) to capture leaders' behaviour and perception of their leadership styles respectively (Razik & Swanson, 2001; Yukl, 2006). The Ohio State researchers concluded that leadership style could be best described using two dimensions, namely, consideration and initiating structure. In the model, consideration describes a leader's degree of sensitivity to employees' ideas and feelings and the leader's efforts to establish mutual trust. In contrast, initiating structure describes the degree to which a leader defines and structures his/her role and the roles of subordinates towards achieving the goals of a group (Northouse, 2010). Whereas the Ohio State studies used the questionnaires as data collecting instruments to inquire of leadership styles, the current study seeks to explore and describe leadership behaviour from direct experiences of school leaders and their respective teachers.

Further studies on leadership style were conducted in the 1990s at the University of Iowa by White and Lippitt to explore the effect of leadership styles on employee attitudes and productivity (White & Lippitt, 1990; Razik & Swanson, 2001). White and Lippitt wanted to elicit the attitudes and responses of employees to the various leadership styles. These behaviours were defined as democratic, authoritarian, or laissez-faire. The results of the White and Lippitt study (1990) revealed that the democratic styles of leadership was the most preferred by workers as they exhibited togetherness in decision-making and

also high morale. The same workers loathed the authoritarian style, but their performance was found to be higher with an authoritarian leader. The workers also displayed more dependence, more aggressiveness, less individualistic and apathetic response to authoritarian leadership. Northouse (2010) submits that the Iowa studies represent classic research effort on investigating leader behaviour, what they do and the likely effects on subordinate attitudes and performance.

Furthermore, Barnett (2003) found out that teachers in New South Wales were apparently motivated by the care and concern displayed by heads of their schools. However, other motivating factors such as pay incentives, working conditions, workloads, peer relations, work climate, opportunities for growth and advancement could not be ignored (Volunteer Services Overseas, 2002). What surfaces from the literature is the fact that leadership style within a school often shapes the way students learn and grow, and mould teacher contentment and performance (Volunteer Services Overseas, 2002). It is against this background that the researchers designed the current study in order to establish the influence of school leadership styles on the performance of teachers in secondary schools.

Contrary to the submission by Northouse (2010), Saddler (1997) and Wright (1997) claim that the behavioural approach to leadership has some inconsistencies. The style of leadership alone, as noted by Saddler (1997) and Wright (1997), is not sufficient to enable one group of workers to work better than another. They suggest that the context or setting in which the style is used becomes important to consider. As observed by Goleman (2000), Yukl (2006) and Northouse (2010), styles that leaders adopt are far more affected by followers they work with, and the environment within which they operate. It is

against this backdrop that the researcher would want to investigate the relationship between leadership styles portrayed by secondary school heads and the performance of their followers (teachers). Rural secondary schools in Bikita District of Zimbabwe provide the context and setting.

Leadership strategies in schools

Mayank (2012) has identified three leadership strategies used in secondary schools. These are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. The autocratic style of leadership, which is sometimes called authoritarian style, is where the leader makes the decisions without the consultation of followers (Dessler and Starke, 2004). For example, if a principal within a school makes a decision for the school without talking to the teachers or getting teacher input, the decision is autocratic. Since the style does not obtain input from the teachers, in secondary schools it is usually not appropriate unless fast action is needed and teacher input is not possible. Autocratic leadership makes it very easy to determine responsibility for bad results, either caused by poor decision making by the leader or poor execution of assignments by subordinates (Rajeev, 2011).

Democratic leadership is the type of leadership where decisions are made by a group as a group. Leaders who use a democratic style obtain the input of others before making a decision. In secondary schools, the style is appropriate when teachers are able to agree or when a small group of teachers are needed for the decision. In practice, democratic styles are not always practical because too many ideas can cloud the decision and make it hard for the group to make a decision. According to Bradley (2011), democratic leadership is very likely enhances individual and team performance in achieving organizational goals.

The laissez-faire leader is one who does not participate in the problems and leaves them for others to solve instead. Generally this style of leadership is only

used for delegation purposes to have a smoothly running school. The principal in a school might use this method when he is unable to perform a task or solve a problem due to having too many tasks to keep up with. The style allows the leader to give followers complete freedom to make decisions and to complete tasks in whatever way the followers see it fit (Dessler & Starke, 2004). Mayank (2012) claims that when used individually or in combination, the strategies can enhance individual and team performance among teachers and team performance among teachers. Hesham (2010) corroborates this claim by stating that each of these strategies is a style of leadership that the school heads exhibits in directing the behaviour of teachers towards attainment of personal or school goals.

Zimbabwean context and setting

According to the *Nziramasanga Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999)*, the problem of unsatisfactory or variable teacher performance in Zimbabwean schools has been attributed to a wide range of factors which include complex working conditions teachers have to deal with, dwindling financial resources. However, a report compiled by the former Provincial Education Director for Manicaland in Zimbabwe from field observations on schools suggested that leadership deficits and teacher performance are the major contributing factors to the failure of pupils (Staff Reporter, *The Manica Post*, 2012). Implied in the report is the fact that school leadership has a key role to play in promoting increased teacher performance in schools. It is on the basis of such observations that the present research was designed to find out the perceived influence of school leadership styles on teachers' performance that has been problematic and controversial to researchers (Adeyemi, 2010; Roul, 2012).

Few studies to determine the relationship between school leadership and

teacher performance in Zimbabwe have been conducted. It is against the above background that the current study has been designed to establish the perceived influence of leadership styles on the performance of teachers within selected rural secondary schools in Bikita district of Masvingo province, Zimbabwe.

Research questions

The following were the research questions generated for the study on the perceived influence of the School Head Leadership styles on the Teachers' performance:

- i) Which specific leadership style do school heads in Bikita district rural secondary schools use?
- ii) What major factors affect teachers' performance in Bikita district rural secondary schools?
- iii) How do teachers perceive school leadership styles in secondary schools in Bikita district rural secondary schools?
- iv) To what extent does the leadership style of a school head influence teachers' performance in rural secondary schools in Bikita district?

Methodology

Mixed method research design was used in this study. It permits collecting, analysing and 'mixing' of qualitative and quantitative approaches and data at some stage in the research process of a single study (Creswell, 2009). The rationale for mixing the methods is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods can adequately evaluate the study. Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010) concur and assert that mixed method allows use of the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and this minimises their shortfalls which yields a better research product.

Population and sampling

The target population for this study was composed of school heads and classroom teachers. It was not possible to contact all the school heads and classroom teachers in the entire district because it would be very involving. Therefore it was very important to select samples of respondents which actually represented the population. Those samples provided data on the research questions. The researchers came up with a representative sample of the population by using a convenient sampling because of the limited resources like time, money and materials. Ten out of forty secondary schools were used for the study which was about 25% of the total number of schools in Bikita District. From the ten schools, all the school heads (10) were involved and six (6) teachers who were randomly selected from each school were also involved, making a total of seventy (70) respondents that were used for the study.

Data collection instruments

In carrying out this research, the questionnaire and interviews were used to facilitate soliciting of information on the perceived influence of leadership styles on teachers' performance in rural secondary schools in Bikita district. A self-administered questionnaire was designed and used to gather data from the respondents in the sample. The questionnaire consisted of questions which were used to measure attitudes, opinions and feeling of the respondents and was administered to all the seventy teachers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; the first section focused on the personal background of the respondents and section two had both closed and open ended questions derived from the research questions. Semi-structured interviews also provided data collected from the ten school heads. The interviews allowed the researcher to probe the interviewees and at the same time give the respondents time to ask questions for clarification.

Data collection procedure

Appointments were made with school heads at the selected schools for the administration of questionnaires to the teachers and for the interviews with the school heads. Researchers collected the questionnaires soon after the respondents had filled in the questionnaires and hence there was a 100% return. Interviews were then conducted with the school head in his office as per appointment.

Discussion and interpretation

These are presented in relation to the four research questions and from the findings made through the questionnaires and the interviews carried out with the respondents. Qualitative data was analysed in themes while quantitative data was presented in pie chart using SSPS statistical analysis. The four research questions will be discussed below one after the other.

Research question 1

Which specific leadership style is used by school heads in rural secondary schools in Bikita district?

Generally, most participants corroborated that school heads were democratic, though at times they were autocratic, depending on the situation. This description of the school heads behaviour concurred with observation by Yukl (2005) that a leadership style that is effective in some situation may not be successful in others. This observation was critical in the current study to identify specific leadership styles used by the school heads in rural secondary schools in Bikita district. A pertinent issue that emerged from the democratic leadership style was its promotion of good communication. The participants emphasised the importance of communication in the smooth running of the school. They

pointed out that the school situation offered various levels of communication such as between the school head and teachers. The participants agreed that communication was both directive and motivational as indicated by Hannagan (2002) who emphasised that communication is directive in the sense that it helps to clarify specific desire behaviour expected to be performed and motivational to the extent that it stimulates greater effort among teachers.

Depending on the styles of leadership the school head was using, it was said communication could ignite or stifle teacher's performance in the school. In the present study, all school heads concurred on the use of morning assemblies, staff briefings or meeting, circulars for information dissemination, memos to staff members as means of communication in their schools. Teachers also attested to the fact that some school heads used memos, as well as cell-phones to send messages very effectively. The above sentiments and experiences by the participant help illuminate the importance the teachers attached to communication as a building block for the school head's leadership style in relation to how teachers perform. If communication is properly practised within a school, democracy prevails, while a situation which stifles communication is perceived as autocratic and may breed resentment. Instances also exist when leaders sometimes leave communication to chances, where subordinates are left to guess what to do next. Okumbe (1998) refers this as to *laissez-faire* style of leadership. This current study has shown that although various form of leadership styles exist, the democratic style has been reported to dominate in Bikita district schools. It has tended to promote not only positive feelings, but enhanced teacher performance also based on participants' perspectives. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the number of responses towards different types of leadership.

Table 1

Number of Respondents per Type of Leadership

TYPE OF LEADERSHIP	NO. OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE (%)
Democratic	63	90
Autocratic	5	7
Laissez – faire	2	3
TOTAL	70	100

As Table 1 and the pie chart in Figure 1 illustrate, an overwhelming majority of participants, 90% indicated that their school heads use democratic way to sort out any school issues while 3% are laissez-faire and 7% argued that their leaders employed autocratic leadership style.

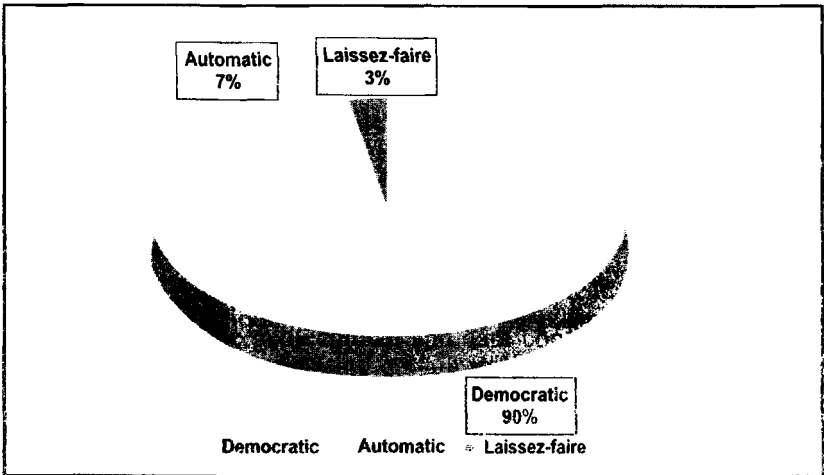


Figure 1. Types of Leadership Styles.

Research question 2

What are the major factors that affect teachers' performance in rural secondary schools in Bikita district?

The factors that affect teachers' performance are a subject that has emerged as one of the major themes from the analysis of data from both school heads and teachers. In the execution of their daily duties, teachers felt they operated in very varies circumstances which affected their performances, either positively or negatively. The teachers strongly believed that their performance could be improved if certain conditions were met. The factors that emerged to be of concern to the participants include lack of motivation, nature of student, teacher incompetence and need for professional development. Each of these factors falls into one of the three categories identified by researchers as determining teachers' performance (Griffin, 2012). The categories include motivation, work environment and competence. The factors that were of major concern to both the teachers and school heads are discussed below.

Lack of motivation

The participants expressed their lack of motivation as one of the major inhibiting factor causing poor performance by teachers. It was reported to exist in various forms such as low remunerations, lack of rewards and incentives, and lack of appreciation. Interestingly, all descriptions used are collectively perceived to be monetary rewards. Teachers, especially, were not interested to talk about any non-monetary forms of rewards; as long as these were not made available, the teachers felt de-motivated on the job. The perception of motivation was therefore focused on monetary rewards, anything less than that did not constitute a motivating factor. This kind of situation is in line with a similar study that was conducted by Volunteer Services Overseas (2002) on teacher motivation and performance in three developing countries (Malawi, Zambia and New Papua Guinea). Findings of that research are comparable with those of the present study. It was found that the poor absolute value of the teachers' salaries was a significant factor influencing their motivation. Poor

remuneration had a detrimental effect on classroom performance. In the present study, teachers complained of very little or nothing at all in terms of salary supplements such as incentives, rural allowances or performance awards in schools. Incentives were outlawed by current Education Minister, Lazarus Dokora. His argument was that they are causing confusions, some schools were giving more than the others and poor rural schools were giving next to nothing. This situation has definitely eroded teachers' motivation and affected their performances.

Contrary to what the present study findings show researchers on motivation such as Guajardo (2011) suggests that school heads should provide teachers with sources of intrinsic motivation because they have a lasting effect on teacher performance and professionalism. Examples of such intrinsic sources are availability of opportunities for job enrichment through delegation of duties, professional growth and advancement, collaboration with colleagues in the profession. However, in the present study, teachers are seeking motivational supports of immediate needs to their survival and living. Having established teachers' understanding and perceptions surrounding motivation, the next section will discuss the nature of student.

The nature of student

There was general consensus from both teachers and school heads who argued that the calibre of students that were recruited into the secondary schools was considered as below average performers who had failed Grade Seven in the majority of cases. Teachers lamented the free for all kind of situation where no child was to be left behind. The views expressed by these participants are supported by Nziramansanga (1999) and Mutanda (2014) who posit that rural day secondary schools performed badly in the O-level examinations partly

because they enrolled students into Form One with low passes from primary schools. The sentiments expressed by participants also indicate signs of discouragement and hopelessness in the way teachers perceived the calibre of their students. The situation required personal effort from individual teachers, as remarked by one of the teachers. Not even the cleverest of all the school head's leadership styles would help redeem some of these students who were reported to be unable to read or write, according to comments from the participants. The Nziramasanga Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (1999) made findings that included, among a wide range of factors, teachers having to deal with students of varying backgrounds and ability. Findings from the present study confirmed that calibre of students recruited into the rural secondary schools has affected teacher performance. It can be seen therefore, that the nature of students admitted in the secondary schools in the present study is a factor that has a negative impact on the performance of the teacher.

Teacher competence

This section discusses the views that came from the participants who indicated that the competence of some teachers was found to directly affect the teachers most. Competence is a very critical characteristic that defines a good teacher (Griffin, 2012), even in Zimbabwe today. The findings from the present study indicate that teachers' incompetence was an issue raised by school heads. The teachers were silent on it. No teacher ever mentioned teacher competence as one of their deficiencies. The views given by some of the school heads in the present study suggested that the low pass rates experienced by the schools under study could be attributed to teachers' incompetence. The question to ask would be: How did the school heads measure teacher incompetence? The scenario just described is perhaps the opposite of what was reported by participants in the

present study. The schools used in this study continued to score low passes in their O-Level examinations. The teachers have not received any performance awards because they have not reached the expected measure. Therefore the teachers were labelled as 'incompetent'. The rest of the learning activities that took place prior to the final examination were ignored, let alone some other factors at play. This situation has been described by Chinyani, Kadodo, Madungwe and Mandiudza (2013) as "the impact of examinations on school curriculum from a Zimbabwean perspective". The original idea of competence has been distorted to the extent that rural secondary school teachers appeared to be sleeping on duty by the way they are treated when they post zero percent pass rates. They get de-motivated and this adversely affected their performance.

Professional development

The school heads and teachers shared the same views that there was need for teachers to continuously seek improvement in terms of professional growth and career advancement. This was evidenced by the number of staff development meetings, subject panel workshops at school and district level, and such related seminars being organised in the schools. The teachers believed that the workshops and meetings provided the platform for sharpening and enriching their professional knowledge and skills. One school head was lamenting that some of the teachers did not have essential academic subjects like mathematics at O-Level. Another school head commented that,

"... there are quite a number of graduates who are not teachers, they specialized in sociology, psychology and applied chemistry and they are teaching English, Geography and Integrated Science and this is actually prevalent in all the schools in our cluster."

The opinion expressed by teachers and their school heads with regards to staff development workshops, seminars and even furthering their education was

found to be a noble practice in the field of education.

Teachers also felt the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe should invest in quality staff development programmes to benefit teachers towards better performance in their schools. In addition to staff development programmes, based on the findings of the present study, teachers had a need for career advancement in order to enhance their teaching performance. Teachers, however, have noted that career advancement and opportunities for further studies were sometimes unavailable or difficult to come by in rural areas. This finding is consistent with observations by Yarrow, Ballantyne, Hansford, Herschell and Millwater (1999) that urban areas offer easy access to further education more than rural areas. Moreover, teachers in rural areas were less likely to have opportunities to engage in other professional development activities. This lack of opportunities was likely to hinder their chances of advancing with their academic pursuits, thereby reducing their performances at work.

Research question 3

How do teachers perceive leadership styles of school heads in rural secondary schools in Bikita district?

From the open questionnaire responses, teachers admitted that a relationship existed between the leadership style of a school head and teacher performance. This was explained by one of the respondents this way:

“... really, his influence can be felt on my work because on a day when I'm not in the mood to work, his mere presence pushes me and I can feel the force behind.”

This shows that teachers could not afford to relax from teaching in the presence of the school head. In response to how exactly the head's style affected their performance, a participant observed that,

"... we know we really need his presence."

The participant went further to explain that the school head's presence always gave her a lot of confidence in her work as she felt guided and not lost. This statement demonstrates that the leader, with whatever style of leadership, had an effect on the work of the teacher and the extent to which it was performed.

The teachers recognized the school heads role in the school as crucial and important. One respondent commented to say that,

"There is need for the head to be there because he makes order in the school. We need a head. For a school to operate without a Head would make a big difference because he has things that ... no one else is able to do. So, to say there's no Head, it is a big mistake. It is imperative therefore that the school head be present at the school most of the time because their role is indispensable."

Delegation of duties by the school head is another pillar that participants perceived to support the nature of leadership style of the school head. During the interviews, both teachers and school heads acknowledged the need for delegation of duties as it was perceived to promote efficiency, motivation, satisfaction and development towards increased performance. While the school head had full responsibility for organizational performance, respondents felt that the leader should not make all decisions single-handed. One of the school heads pointed out that,

“... If you don't delegate, then the order of the school crumbles.”

This sentiment is supported by Basu (1994) who also observed that effective leadership is made possible only through the process of delegation. According to Robbins and Coulter (2005), “... delegation is the assignment of authority to another person to carry out specific activities”. When practiced, it allows subordinates to make decisions and use the authority given to them to perform tasks. The ability to delegate duties to others, therefore, reflects the type of leadership styles adopted by the school head.

Respondents in this study pointed out that school heads must allow members to participate in decision-making and thus utilize all available human resources and expertise. In a secondary school setting, like in this study, without sharing responsibilities and authority with subordinates (teachers), it would be impossible for the school heads to carry out all tasks of the school single-handedly. It was further emphasized by respondents that when members of the organization are involved in decision-making through the process of delegation of duty, it promoted a good organizational climate. Members would identify themselves with decisions and become motivated to execute delegated assignments, Basu (1994, p. 176) had this to say, “... subordinates develop greater loyalty and a sense of identification with the organization if they are made co-partners in the exercise of authority”. This was perceived to be a morale booster which provided sufficient incentive for teachers to work hard. The participants in the study indicated that they enjoyed working with school heads who delegate duties to their subordinates as this enhanced their performance. It is essential to note that school heads' practice of delegating duties to teachers was perceived, therefore, to be a determinant of teacher performance.

Research question 4

To what extent does leadership style of school head influence performance of teachers' in rural secondary schools in Bikita district?

The school heads were interviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding of their current practice as school heads in relation to the performance of teachers in their schools. All school heads in the present study indicated that they believe in democracy as a means of running their schools to accomplish their goals. One of the school heads pointed out that the most preferred administrative style was the democratic style of leadership saying,

“... my major administrative style is participatory or consultative, though other methods can be used depending on the situation to ensure that we move forward.”

Though put differently, another school head echoed similar sentiments about the style of leadership and said,

“...we need to be democratic in whatever we do in most cases. We've got to involve everyone in the day-to-day running of our school in terms of shaping our school policy...here and there we have to be autocratic but mostly you need to be democratic.”

Another school head was also very emphatic on the practice of democracy in the school when he said,

“... less of autocracy and more of democracy because we should know that whatever result we get in the school is through collective effort.”

These views suggested that the democratic style of leadership enhances teacher performance through communal effort. Further probing the concept of

leadership style used by the school heads revealed that there were several elements which the school heads considered in shaping up their leadership styles. These are involving teachers in decision-making, defining clear communication channels, delegating responsibilities and practicing good interpersonal skills. One school head had this to say about communication in the school:

“In fact I normally employ an open-door policy, frank open dialogue with the teachers as well as with the students and exchange views”.

On who should be communicated to, another school head put it this way,

“The teachers should know the school communication structure so that when we carry out activities, no one is in the dark...that way; they are bound to give maximum effort”.

The sentiments expressed by the school heads help to reveal the importance of communication in a school at enhancing teacher performance. If clearly defined modes of communication are present in the school, everybody knows what to do and when and this is bound to increase teacher's effort. School heads who participated in the current study also emphasized the importance of involving teachers in decision-making. One school head said,

“Normally we sit down as a committee and have some suggestions from the teachers so that we map the way forward without them behind so that we progress as a team in whatever we do.”

This point was reinforced by another head who said,

“... we involve our teachers in our day-to-day running of the school, in decision-making. If we involve them, then that's democratic and they tend to own whatever performance the school achieves.”

The above views shared by the school heads help to explain the relationship between the leadership style of a school head and teacher performance.

Another important element that helps shape the leadership style of the school head, based on the participants' views, is the interpersonal skills displayed in the school. The interpersonal skills are relevant in building healthy relation in a school. Healthy relationships normally result from good communication discussed above. In this study, school heads expressed satisfaction with regards to their relationships with teachers. One of the school heads was confident and resolute about improving their interpersonal skills when he said,

“I think our relationship here is good. We sometimes have hassles here and there, but they are just minor...there is need for improvement here and there so that teachers produce their actual best in terms of our results.”

In similar response, another school heads was upbeat about his relations with teachers:

“... our relationships are cordial. There is no animosity. Yes, at least there's some kind of brotherly relationship, though of course at times I have to be authoritarian to make things move.”

The fourth element that helps shape the leadership style of the school head, based on participants' views, is delegation abilities by the school head. One of the school heads felt a real need for delegation in the following way:

“If you don't delegate, then the order of the school will crumble. We need to segregate our duties. We can't do everything all the time. As a school head, my duty is to look at the critical areas.”

Delegation lightens the school head's work and enriches subordinates' job as well. This is highlighted by another head's observation,

“As a school, we have various committees, up to eleven of them. Each teacher belongs to a committee which has an administrative role and this makes my work easier in that teachers and other members of the administration also exercise leadership roles at their level.”

This shows how important the practice of delegation is both in the leadership style of the school head and performance of the teacher.

The study revealed that even though the majority of school heads adopt democratic leadership styles, there are some school heads using autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Recommendations

After examining findings of the study on the relationship between leadership styles and performance of teachers in rural secondary schools in Bikita district, the researchers suggested the following recommendations:

- ❖ The relevant department of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary School Education should sensitise school heads to apply democratic leadership style in schools because it encompasses group discussion, debate and sharing of ideas and encouraging subordinates to feel good and free about their involvement differently from laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles.
- ❖ School heads should develop good communication channels whereby teachers are aware of all the activities that are going on in schools and also involve teachers in most decision making process.

- ❖ It is also recommended that school leaders motivate their teachers in the work place for good performance; this can be intrinsic or extrinsic, in which each teacher is reminded of the mission and vision of the school associated and the desire to transform him/her into an individual strongly committed to the progress and school efficiency. The basis for teachers' motivation is that people have many potentialities and some of it is never tapped and it is by motivation that the school heads can tap these potentialities of teachers.
- ❖ Because incentives were banned, it is recommended that the government should step in by increasing salaries of teachers so as to motivate them to perform better.
- ❖ From the study, it came out clearly that the massive enrolments of pupils affect the calibre of secondary school pupils in rural areas such as Bikita district. Consequently, this affects the performance of teachers. It is therefore recommended that there should be a cut-off point in terms of performance for enrolment pupils into secondary schools
- ❖ In order to improve teacher competence, it is recommended that teachers should be given study leave to further their studies in the relevant areas in order to improve their performance.

Conclusions

The democratic style of leadership of a school head is the most appropriate for enhancing teacher performance in secondary schools in most situations. The autocratic leadership styles by a school head breeds resentment since teachers are intellectual professionals who believe in teamwork for the smooth running of schools in order to achieve school goals at the maximum level and to improve

their performance. Teachers prefer a school leadership that involves them in decision making in most circumstances since they are also potential school leaders. School heads should therefore develop a good communication channel to foster teamwork with teachers. This entails that laissez-faire style of leadership should be rarely be used. Leadership styles have a strong influence on teacher performance and school heads should use strategies that take cognizance of wide range of needs of teachers in order to enhance their performance.

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An Anatomy of Curriculum Innovation in Zimbabwean Economy

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Abstract

The magnitude of educational reforms independence in Zimbabwe is legendary history of educational provision in post-independence was increasingly realised that for the theme of education with production to take root, it was a subject of political economy (PE). It was to provide an epistemological understanding of the role of pupils who would consequently champion the role of citizens and leaders. The attempt to introduce the most outstanding curriculum innovation through documentary analysis, informant interviews, innovation and erstwhile school pupils in schools, proffers that the introduction of curriculum because it was a top down process of change without a supportive constituency of the various stakeholders recommends that planned curriculum change should be informed by the values, goals and expectations of those it seeks to serve.

Introduction

The prime purpose of this paper is to analyse and introduce political economy (PE) in the Zimbabwean context.



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